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RON DEMPSTER AWARD 1999 - **Mr. Bill Sawynok.**

This award was instigated with the object in mind of paying tribute to persons who have demonstrated an enthusiastic attitude to the enhancement of recreational fishing in Queensland.

It is not an award taken lightly and the decision taken by the State Executive is one considered after much debate. It is not an award relating to fishing prowess in any way.....moreover, one that is simply bestowed for dedication.

It is also an award which includes the element of surprise, as the recipient is usually unaware of our intentions.....and it is this element of surprise which has stumped the State Executive, because we wanted to bestow the Ron Dempster Award onto Bill Sawynok....but as he never knew of the nomination, every year he convinced us to give it to someone else.....which we did.

....this year, we deliberately set out to ignore his suggestions....and so the Ron Dempster Award for 1999 will finally be given to Bill Sawynok.

Bill is known to all as the fellow who looks after Suntag, the Tagging program of Ansa Qld.

But Bill goes a little further than just that and one needs to delve deeper to see just where this fellow comes from.

No doubt his interest extends far beyond his formative years in ANSA to a youth growing up in the southern parts of Australia and having a keen interest in fishing from an early age. The evolution to an association with ANSA began when Bill worked for the Department of Lands in Bundaberg. Here he made firm friends with several people with whom he still associates and fishes. His interest saw him rise to executive positions within the Bundaberg Sportfishing Club at that time and spilled over to Rockhampton and the Keppel Bay Sportfishing Club following a transfer with his employment.

Sportfishing took up a great deal of his time and eventually he was fully engulfed by his new club, Captag. Here too, he spent a good deal of time, holding down

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various positions on their committee.

The interest didn't stop there and soon he was deeply involved with the Qld Sport and Recreational Fishing Council (or sunfish as we know it today) as a Liaison Officer, reporting on a regular basis to meetings in Brisbane. It was at these venues where persons of authority began to sit up and take notice of this fellow from Central Queensland, who seemed to know a little of the politics of fishing – perhaps even for this period, a little too much for their liking. However, it was people like Bill who started the ball rolling within Government that escalated recreational fishing to where it is today. His deliberations were often enthusiastic and at times, long winded, but in the end all knew Bill was present and working in top gear.

His dedication towards Suntag began long before its association with ANSA. The Queensland Govt formerly had a program, which seemed to have no function and no answers. In 1989, Bill approached the Government of the day with a grandiose plan that **WE** could take it over. Many sat around with blank looks and demanded to know just who was going to have the time to do such a thing. It didn't take much convincing to have the QDPI looking towards a funding plan and the game was on.....the rest, as they say, is history.

Not content with leaving well enough alone with tagging in Queensland, Bill then set about influencing other State bodies to become involved in their own tagging programs, again headed by ANSA involvement – thus the birth of Austag.

Today , while we have passed the 200,000 tagged fish mark. Bill's skills and ideologies have revolutionised many of the research programs.

His acceptance within industry and Government departments has led him to undertake programs for not just the Govt but bodies such as the Institute of Marine Biology and various universities.

His influence was noticeable during The Burns Inquiry and those trips to Brisbane were also extended to include meetings with Queensland Fisheries Management Authority, Department of Primary Industries and the Department of Environment on many issues relating to and on behalf of recreational fishing. He served on the Queensland Fishing Industry Research Advisory Council; he was also the first recreational representative to be elected to the Board of the Fisheries Research Development Corporation. He is also a member of National Heritage Regional Assessment Panel and State Fisheries Technical Advisory panel.

He is a Consultant to the Department of Natural Resources; he is Project Leader involved in the replanting of thousands of trees in the Twelve Mile Creek area, which is an important barramundi nursery, and he also produced a substantial and highly respected report on the Fitzroy River Catchment.

He's an Australian representative on the International Game Fishing Association since 1993. He took over the running of the badly managed 1 800 return tag phone number and turned it in to a reliable and respected operation.

He is now a Member of the National Executive of ANSA and has been to every Ansa Q Annual Conference since 1979.

He is a member of the QFMA Recreational Fishing Information Co-ordinating Committee; he represents recreational anglers on the Central Qld Zonal Advisory Committee and a member of the WAMP community Consultative Committee representing recreational fishing interests.

Most recently, he was elected to the CRC Board.

This is still, just a sample of the Bill's involvement in recreational fishing.....

.....and so we have to wonder, **WHY** has it taken so long for us to bestow this honour upon him.

Well, as stated at the beginning - his influence is strong and he just kept influencing us to nominate someone else!!

This award is bestowed this year with the sincere belief that if any person deserves recognition for done deeds, it is **Bill Sawynok**.

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